DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 274 054 EA 018 814

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TITLE 1984 Arizona Principals' Academy. Evaluation Report.
INSTITUTION Arizona State Dept. of Education, Phoenix.
PUB DATE Sep 84
NOTE 13p.; For the 1985 Principals' Academy evaluation report, see EA 018 815.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Improvement Programs; Instructional Leadership; *Management Development; *Principals; *Program Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS *Arizona Principals Academy

ABSTRACT

The Arizona Principals' Academy was first held in 1984 to enable principals to share practices promoting school effectiveness and to personalize their roles as instructional leaders. The goals of the program included informing the principals of current thinking, practices, and strategies; providing practical training to meet identified needs; collaborating with statewide educational organizations; establishing a networking system among principals; providing ancillary services to assist in promoting school effectiveness, and helping academy participants develop individual action plans for school improvement. Evaluation methods were devised to determine participants' interests, presenters' strengths, and overall program content and quality. The evaluation effort revealed that most topics were pertinent and applicable to participants' needs; that the academy was well managed; that participants appreciated the unique opportunities for interaction with peers afforded by the academy; and that the college campus setting lent an academic tone to the experience. In addition to providing an overview of the academy and reactions to it, this paper includes a summary of the evaluation data; a listing of participants by sex and professional role; a table of program topics considered strong, average, or weak; tables of responses to program content, methods, and management; and suggestions for future academies. (PGD)

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# EVALUATION REPORT

# 1984 PRINCIPALS' ACADEMY

**Prepared By**

**LOLA P. GROSS, Ph.D.**

EA 018 814

September, 1984

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Printed in Phoenix, Arizona
by the
Arizona Department of Education
Total Copies Printed . . . 600
Total Printing Cost . . . $560
Unit Printing Cost . . . $ 933
Date of Printing . . . . 11/85

## 1984 ARIZONA PRINCIPALS' ACADEMY

## EVALUATION REPORT

The first Arizona Principals' Academy is now history; however, its influence and results will continue to have an impact on education in Arizona schools. The primary purpose of the Academy was to provide a way for educational leaders to share practices which promote school effectiveness and to personalize their roles as instructional leaders of their schools. Six goals were identified as important to this primary purpose:

1. To provide an opportunity for principals to become knowledgeable about the current thinking and practices related to school effectiveness and how to implement strategies for success.

2. To offer principals practical and specific training to meet their preidentified needs.

3. To collaborate with school districts, professional associations, educational consortia, Arizona Department of Education staff, and other groups in professional development efforts.

4. To provide a vehicle for the exchange of ideas and to establish a networking system among Arizona principals.

5. To provide ancillary services to assist principals in promoting school effectiveness.

6. To promote and assist each Academy participant in the development of an individual action plan for school improvement.

In order to determine if the goals were met, to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Academy, to provide direction for planning future academies, and to provide information for sharing with interested groups that had supported the academy concept, several strategies were devised and implemented.

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First, an Advisory Committee, made up of 15 members representative of the private sector, principals, and other educational groups, was formed. This committee was charged with providing direction in planning an appropriate program for the Academy, suggesting possible presenters, and giving feedback on the plans developed by the Arizona Department of Education staff. In addition, members were given the responsibility of helping to evaluate the outcomes of the Academy.

Second, a questionnaire was developed and sent to all applicants who were accepted in the Academy to determine their interests and expectations from the Academy experience. Data from this questionnaire were used in planning the program content.

Third, three evaluation forms were developed to ascertain the partipants' reactions to different aspects of the academy and to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the Academy as a whole. The following evaluation forms were utilized:

1. An individual presenter form was used to provide feedback about the relevance of the topic being presented as well as speaker dynamics, e.g., delivery and organization of material.

2. A daily evaluation form was used to determine the value of each day's activities. The daily evaluation form also included a section for comments so that adjustments and modifications could be made if there were problems or situations that needed immediate attention.

3. A final evaluation form was used to evaluate all the activities of the Academy. This form included questions relating to the general management and facilities, plus a narrative section that allowed participants to react to the total academy experience and to make suggestions for components that might be added to next year's Academy, as well as for those that should be retained from this summer's program.

In addition to these forms, on the final day of each session, each participant was asked to make one statement that he/she would be willing to own. Three by five cards were utilized for this purpose, and participants were asked to sign their names. This provided some data for immediate feedback to Mrs. Carolyn Warner, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and other groups who were interested in the outcome of the Academy.

Data from all of these sources were utilized in assessing the success of the Academy. Although nearly all evaluations were positive, it was possible to identify those topics that received extremely high ratings and those that were not as positive. Using data from the two questions that pertained to content on the presenter evaluation forms, as well as comments from all of the forms utilized, topics were analyzed as favorable, average, or weak. Since the presenter form contained a continuum rating scale of -3 to +3, with minus three being lowest and plus three being highest, those responses that received a rating of either +3 or +2 were considered favorable; those topics that received either a rating of +1 or -1 or had less than ten responses were considered average; and those topics that received a rating of -2 or -3 were considered weak. Results from this tabulation are included in Table I, presented with other tables, at the end of the report.

An evaluation of the program content and methods was also part of the final evaluation form. Table II summarizes the responses from participants in all three academy sessions.

Another section of the final evaluation forms asked for ratings on the general management of the Academy. These data are presented in Table III.

An analysis of the results presented in Table III indicates that the general management of the Academy was positive. Although the adequacy of the accommodations did not receive as high a rating as other areas, 64 per cent of the respondents indicated that the accommodations were adequate. Certainly, the accommodations were convenient, encouraged participant interaction, and served the purposes of the Academy.

In addition, suggestions from the comments section on the final evaluation form were analyzed to provide direction for planning future academies. These are summarized in Chart I.

## SUMMARY
## EVALUATION DATA

1. **Academy topics were pertinent and applicable to the participants' needs.** Responses indicated that most of the presenters were not only practical in their approach to their topics, but also interesting and motivational in their delivery.

2. **The overall management of the Academy was efficiently executed.** Attention given to details caused the participants to comment that they were treated as V.I.P.'s. The concern and caring exhibited by the Academy staff were mentioned repeatedly as a factor in the Academy's strengths. Participants indicated that the ADE staff were truly supportive of their efforts, recognized them as the instructional leaders of the schools, were interested in their welfare, and were willing to provide continued help and support whenever needed.

3. **The interaction among participants was unique and positive.** It was unique in that, for the first time, principals felt that they had a support group to share ideas and common concerns; it was positive in that a networking system was initiated which will continue to provide support and develop collegiality among the participants. The ADE staff will support and encourage this networking through follow-up sessions, on-site visitations to each of the schools represented at the Academy, periodic newsletters and correspondence, and interaction at conferences and meetings.

4. **The setting on a college campus set the stage for a truly academic experience.** The program was demanding, challenging, timely, and intense. Even the homework assignments were cited as lending an academic seriousness to the purposes of the Academy. Although the dormitories and the principal classroom were not ideal, participants commented that staying in the dormitories, dining together, and walking to classes helped to promote collegiality. The weather and natural beauty of the campus contributed to a sense of comfort and purpose.

5. **Support by Mrs. Warner, the members of the Legislature, and members of the State Board of Education was recognized and appreciated.** The willingness of members of these groups to present at the sessions, to talk with the participants and answer their personal questions, and to interact with them during a social activity, i.e., the steak fry at Fort Tuthill, was mentioned several times as a highlight of the Academy.

6. **The requirement that every participant develop an action plan for school improvement provided an aspect to this academy which sets it apart from principals' academies and administrative training programs throughout the nation.** The follow-up sessions that are an integral part of the Academy program will focus on the implementation of these plans, will provide an opportunity for participants to discuss any problems they have encountered, and will allow participants an opportunity to share ideas and identify resources that will be helpful in promoting the image of the principal as the instructional leader. On-site visitations to every school and every principal who participated in this first Academy will provide further data for assessing the value of this strategy and the impact it will have on increased student achievement when the principal exhibits instructional leadership.

## PARTICIPANT SUMMARY

| Category | Numbers |
|---|---|
| Participants (Total) | 176 |
| Women | 46 |
| Men | 130 |
| Principals | 153 |
| Assistant Principals | 17 |
| Head Teachers | 5 |
| Program Directors/Counselors | 1 |
| Out-of-State | 2 |
| Geographic Representation | |
| All Arizona Counties | |
| Arkansas | |
| Kansas | |

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**TABLE I**

**Program Topics - Three Academies**

| Favorable | Average | Weak |
|---|---|---|
| The Principal in an Effective School/Arizona Principal Examples | Future Role of Assessment | Nationwide Trends for Effective Schools |
| The Principal as an Instructional Leader | Education Appropriations in Arizona | Update: Arizona State Board of Education |
| The Principal as a Team Member | The Principal's Responsibility for Communication | The Value of Education |
| Principles of Effective Instruction | Developing an Action Plan | The Arizipe Project |
| Projecting Population Trends | Academic Decathlon | The Parent as a Partner in Discipline |
| Writing Across the Curriculum | The Principal and the Media | Computer Assisted Instruction |
| Study Skills Across the Curriculum | Norm-Referenced Tests | School Television |
| Hands-On Computer Workshop | Research on Teacher Effectiveness | Business and Education (Vocational Education) |
| Multiple Assessment Measures | Special Population Presentations | Personnel Selection |
| Effective Use of Assessment | Mock Trials Competition | |
| The Role of the Legislature in Education | Involving the Community | |
| Plant Management | School Discipline - A Positive Approach | |
| School Finance | Effective Schools - An Overview | |
| Management Skills in Education and the Private Sector | The Principal - Time on Task | |
| Teacher Evaluation/Principal Evaluation | Beginning a Computer Program | |
| Teacher Improvement Plans | Instructional Technology - The Computer as a Management Tool | |
| Academic Standards and the Special Student | ASA and the Legislative Process | |
| School Law | How to Recognize a Good School and How to Have a Good School Recognized | |
| Budgeting and the School Principal | | |
| Employee Selection | | |
| Motivating Teachers: What Research Says/Research on Teacher Effectiveness | | |
| The Principal Makes the Difference | | |
| The Principal as a Catalyst for Effective Schools | | |
| Arizona's Best Bet Program | | |
| Update: State Testing Program | | |
| Academic Competition | | |
| Student Evaluation | | |
| Sixty-One Ideas Equal One Very Good School | | |
| Developing a Positive Climate for Staff | | |
| Adolescent Education | | |
| Curriculum and Basic Skills | | |
| Discipline and the Law | | |
| Curriculum and Accountability | | |
| Motivating Students and Staff | | |

## TABLE II

### Program Content and Methods

| Statement | Excellent 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | Poor 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N = 152 | Number of Respondents | | | | |
| The content of the Academy program was as described in the brochure. | 81 | 61 | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| The opening sessions set the stage for the Academy. | 73 | 56 | 17 | 5 | 1 |
| The subject matter was well covered. | 70 | 67 | 14 | 0 | 1 |
| Materials used were relevant to the topic. | 81 | 67 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The content of the Academy was appropriate for your background and experience. | 77 | 67 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| The content and materials presented met your expectations. | 65 | 70 | 15 | 2 | 0 |
| The Academy experience will be useful in your school setting. | 112 | 33 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Discussion was encouraged among conference participants. | 104 | 37 | 10 | 0 | 1 |
| Small groups were effective and did not get bogged down in inconsequentials. | 83 | 41 | 18 | 7 | 3 |
| The choice of presenters was excellent. | 41 | 88 | 20 | 3 | 0 |

## TABLE III

### General Management

| Statement | Excellent 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | Poor 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N = 152 | Number of Respondents | | | | |
| The general management of the Academy was planned and executed well. | 127 | 24 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Breaks were provided promptly and as often as needed. | 71 | 51 | 22 | 6 | 2 |
| Homework assignments were applicable to the day's activities. | 53 | 74 | 20 | 6 | 2 |
| Academy participants were able to see and hear all portions of the program. | 95 | 49 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| Information received before the program | | | | | |
| was clear. | 71 | 53 | 14 | 12 | 2 |
| was complete. | 69 | 48 | 17 | 15 | 3 |
| was received with enough advance notice to allow participants to make plans. | 76 | 43 | 19 | 9 | 5 |
| Academy accommodations | | | | | |
| were adequate. | 44 | 54 | 40 | 12 | 2 |
| were convenient. | 72 | 65 | 13 | 2 | 0 |
| encouraged participant interaction. | 87 | 48 | 13 | 4 | 1 |
| served the purposes of the academy. | 85 | 51 | 14 | 2 | 0 |

## CHART I

### Suggestions For Future Academies

| Mentioned by at Least 20 Respondents | Mentioned by at Least Five Respondents |
|---|---|
| Have more small group intereaction. | Put more emphasis on aspects of law and legal issues. |
| Hold less sessions and include more in-depth sessions. | Remove speakers who are selling a product. |
| Use a shorter time period, perhaps Sunday to Saturday. | Delete Sunday sessions entirely. |
| Give more structure to the "Regional" meetings. | Ask more participants to share and explain successful programs and strategies. |
| Maintain the "Quadrangle" conferences. | Have presenters available to small groups for discussion. |
| Emphasize small school districts and their needs. | Include more information relating to ethnic groups. |
| Prepare and distribute an agenda prior to the Academy. | |

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